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**Santa Monica Pier Aquarium to Host
California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Exhibit
During Month of March**

From gorgeous coastlines and beautiful birds to underwater sea life and happy kids, photographs from the California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest are coming to Heal the Bay's Santa Monica Pier Aquarium for viewing during the month of March. The annual contest is sponsored by the California Coastal Commission, the Thank You Ocean Campaign, and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. The photos selected for the exhibit represent winning entries from over the years.

Santa Monica's Mayor Richard Bloom, who is also a Coastal Commissioner, requested that this traveling exhibit be brought to Santa Monica. "I'm thrilled that these beautiful images are going to be available to residents and visitors in Santa Monica and encourage people to come take a look," he said. "The photos represent what we all love about the California coast."

"I am excited to present science and art together to educate the general public about how interconnected these two disciplines are. The ability to see what the ocean looks like underwater through this exhibit is a great tool to inspire awareness and conservation of the ocean environment. We are pleased to partner with the California Coastal Commission to bring this opportunity to our Aquarium," said Vicki Wawerchak, Aquarium Director.

About the Photo Contest

The annual California Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest has operated since 1998 and features photographs that reflect the importance that the coast and ocean has for California residents and the role that the Coastal Commission, Natural Resources Agency and Ocean Protection Council have played in preserving coastal and marine resources. For more information about the contest, please visit <http://mycoastalphoto.com>.

About the Aquarium

The Santa Monica Pier Aquarium is Heal the Bay's marine education facility located beach-level, just below the Carousel, at the Santa Monica Pier. The Aquarium is open to the general public and attracts more than 85,000 visitors per year. Since Heal the Bay acquired the Aquarium in 2003 from UCLA, more than 475,000 visitors have been welcomed during public hours and approximately 108,000 students have been educated during in-house education programs.

About Heal the Bay

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean. Heal the Bay uses science, education, community action and advocacy to pursue its mission.

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